

September 29, 1982

Dr. Tado Ogura  
South Oaks Hospital  
400 Sunrise Highway  
Amityville, N.Y. 11701

Dear Dr. Ogura,

At the suggestion of Mr. George Zournas (Jochi), I am enclosing Xerox copies of two of the documents that came to the attention of the Board of Trustees of Zen Studies Society in 1979. The third enclosure (also 1979) is a copy of a letter I never sent to Mr. Eido Shimano. The reason I am sending this last is that, on rereading it the other day – quite as if someone else had written it -- I found myself thinking that it was a fair representation of one persuasion available during those days and weeks in 1979... days and weeks and opinions and feelings and facts and judgments and analyses and sadness - all of - them so thoroughly familiar from a similar time in 1975 and another similar to the now in 1982.

Since I do not know how much you know about the events of 1979, I will attempt to give you a brief description.

After 1975, when Mr. Shimano's bedding of a number of women sangha members came to light together with descriptions of his treatment of those and other women, many members quit Zen Studies Society. Those who left in 1975 left for the same reasons others left in 1979 and still others left in 1982. The same may be said for those who stayed. The reasons, the fears, the positions, the angers, the confusions -- each and every concern was exactly the same in 1975 as it was in 1979 as it is in 1982. The only thing that has changed is the people expressing those concerns. In 1975 as in 1979 as now those who stayed and those who left both harbored the hope that some conciliation might be found in the Buddhist -- not to mention human -- certainty that in the confession of error there lay health. In 1975 as in 1979 as now, many loving offers and invitations to that sort of health were placed before Mr. Shimano. In 1975 and in 1979, it didn't work. So, those unwilling to be still in 1975 left. Those willing, stayed. The dust settled even as the situation did not.

In 1979, a monk named Peter Kaufman (Kozen) was cleaning a public closet at Dai Bosatsu monastery when he came upon the enclosed diary written by [REDACTED]. Together with a resident of New York Zendo, David Bogart (Bunyu), he attempted, somewhat maladroitly, to bring the matters discussed in the diary to the attention of the Board of Trustees. The board, according to a letter from then president Korin Sylvan Busch, responded by reaffirming "our confidence in Eido Roshi and his leadership of our sangha." No mention was made in that letter of a willingness to consider the substance of what was contained in the diary. As time passed, the controversy intensified. Kozen and Bunyu wrote another letter to the board. A woman, [REDACTED], wrote an open letter to [REDACTED]. That letter (second enclosure) from [REDACTED], perhaps the most - touching of all the documents I have seen from that time, outlines her experience of Mr. Shimano's

coercive approaches. The Board of Trustees received copies of both the diary and [REDACTED]'s letter.

In the meantime, some board members, at whose instigation I can only guess, began to circulate the rumor 1. That [REDACTED] was unbalanced (and it is true that Mr. Shimano's tastes seem to run to those who are psychologically frail) and, 2. that the notations in the diary were records of her dreams (to be discussed with her Jungian analyst).

Through all of this -- just as in 1975 (and 1962 for all I know) -- numerous conciliatory moves were made towards Mr. Shimano in recognition of the many fine things he had done in the past. I too, a student of almost five years in 1979, wrote a letter to the board asking in essence for open discussion of the substance of Kozen's, Bunyu's, and [REDACTED]'s Letters. This request, together with its outcome, is outlined with more heat than I now feel in my own unsent letter. For all that, after awhile, again as before, the dust settled and the critics were gone.

My own feeling these days is that it is a pity that sex should be the focus of attention. The sexual advances Mr. Shimano made strike me as symptomatic rather than central. Central is what some call "sickness" and what I cannot help but think of as an overweening sense of power. A man who sees things in terms of power has no friends only associates and toadies. The fits of self-pity we have seen around the zendo also strike me as consistent with a power mentality as does the fact that no resident of New York Zendo since 1974, when I first arrived, has left on good terms with Mr. Shimano. Likewise the "noble silence" and the references to a (very faulty) sense of so-called honor. Most significant of all in my mind is the unwillingness to admit error (even as a tactic) and the equating of self with some higher authority to which he alone seems to feel himself privy. Without rancor, I would suggest parallels to Richard Nixon.

Still, in all, I guess I am no longer very interested in all the analyses. Probing motivations, I now feel, is pleasant, perhaps, but it is off the subject. On the subject for me are: 1. actions, and, 2. a reaction I can best describe as neither intellectual nor emotional. That reaction is simply, "No!" Based on that response and on an overload of first-hand experience, I too have left New York Zendo... with deep regret, though certainly not deeper than that felt by all those who preceded me.

In closing, may I say that I sincerely hope the good offices I understand you have offered New York Zendo are fruitful? You are very kind. As part of the Sangha, I thank you and wish you well.

Sincerely,

Adam Fisher  
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